

Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way



Uniformed Services University
of the Health Sciences
4301 Jones Bridge Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-4799

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Contact: Sarah Marshall, Office of
External Affairs

Email: sarah.marshall@usuhs.edu

Military Medical School First to Incorporate Joint Pain Education Program Into Curriculum
*DVCIPM-developed program stresses non-drug solutions, non-opioid drugs when
pharmacological supplementation is needed*

Bethesda, Md. – Prescription opioid abuse and a nationwide heroin epidemic are claiming the lives of tens of thousands of Americans each year. To help address this problem in addition to supporting our service members who may struggle with prescription misuse associated with chronic pain, the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) has implemented a new pain management curriculum – the first medical school in the nation to do so.

Focusing on standardized pain care practices, USU's extensive pain management curriculum teaches clinical pain assessment, pain assessment tools, pharmacologic and psychological approaches to pain management, and behavioral management of chronic pain. It also highlights evidence-based alternative modalities for chronic pain management, and pain as it relates to specific pain conditions, and substance use disorder.

USU is the first medical school to fully incorporate each of the elements included in the Joint Pain Education Program (JPEP), set forth by the USU Defense & Veterans Center for Integrative Pain Management (DVCIPM). Committed to training providers, and building a new model of pain care, the JPEP is a collaborative effort between the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to standardize pain management curriculum.

“The Joint Pain Education Program integrated into the USU curriculum follows more than five years of close work with the Veterans Administration and Federal and civilian pain experts through the USU Defense & Veterans Center for Integrated Pain Management (DVCIPM),” said retired Army Col. (Dr.) Chester “Trip” Buckenmaier, DVCIPM program director. “We are very proud of this work and immensely pleased that our own university is the first adopter of this valuable program.”

To continue optimizing care for warriors and their families, USU will also require its students to take some form of prescriber education beginning in fall 2016, in order to graduate, in line with the newly released Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain.

As outlined by President Barak Obama through the CDC, USU's new pain management curriculum stresses non-drug solutions first and non-opioid drugs when pharmacological supplementation is needed, said retired Army Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Eric Schoomaker, professor and vice-chair for Leadership, Centers and Programs, Department of Military and Emergency Medicine, USU.

"The root of our national opioid problem is poorly managed chronic pain," Schoomaker added. "Proactive pain education is a major step forward for USU and the Military Health System. It educates new uniformed health professionals about a team-focused, multi-professional and multi-modal approach to pain management that places the patient at the center of the plan."

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation's federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. A large percentage of the university's more than 5,200 physician and 1,000 advanced practice nursing alumni are supporting operations around the world, offering their leadership and expertise. USU also has graduate programs in biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research, and in oral biology. The University's research program covers a wide range of clinical and other topics important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.